

## Strive EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strive is the next generation of assessment program designed to test Special Olympics Athletes current state of physical fitness. It replaces TRAIN (Testing Recreational Activities and Improving Nutrition) and has been designed and validated by professionals in the exercise science industry. In continuing the mission of providing opportunities for Special Olympics athletes to improve their performance while becoming more fit, Strive provides a baseline measurement of an athletes' fitness prior to beginning an eight to ten week training period for a chosen sport.

When determining this baseline assessment, typically both fitness-related and skill-related components are assessed to provide a comprehensive evaluation (ACSM, 2014). An assessment would include tests and measurements of the 4 characteristics of physical fitness:

- 1) body composition,
- 2) cardiorespiratory fitness,
- 3) muscular fitness, and
- 4) flexibility

In addition to skill-related characteristics of:

- 1) agility,
- 2) coordination,
- 3) balance,
- 4) power, and
- 5) speed

The comprehensive result would provide information on the characteristics and attributes an athlete possesses that relate to his or her ability to perform physical activity.

Strive delivers a 10 station fitness assessment, as well as complimentary educational stations on hydration and nutrition. Understanding the critical role coaches play in training an athlete, a new station targeted at this important audience has also been incorporated that educates and arms coaches with tools that they can integrate into practices and training plans to improve their team's performance. Coaches are encouraged to complete a Strive assessment prior to the start of a season, take the baseline performance measurements of their athletes to guide their training plans, incorporate exercises to focus on improvement, and conduct a follow up Strive assessment at the end of the season to monitor improvements.





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